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How did the Hinds County ballot blunder happen?

Precincts ran out of ballots on Election Day

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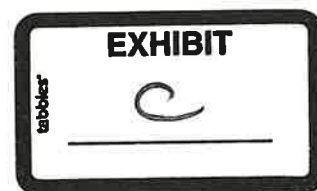
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JACKSON, Miss. — The Hinds County Election Commission is looking into why nine precincts **ran out of ballots on Election Day.**

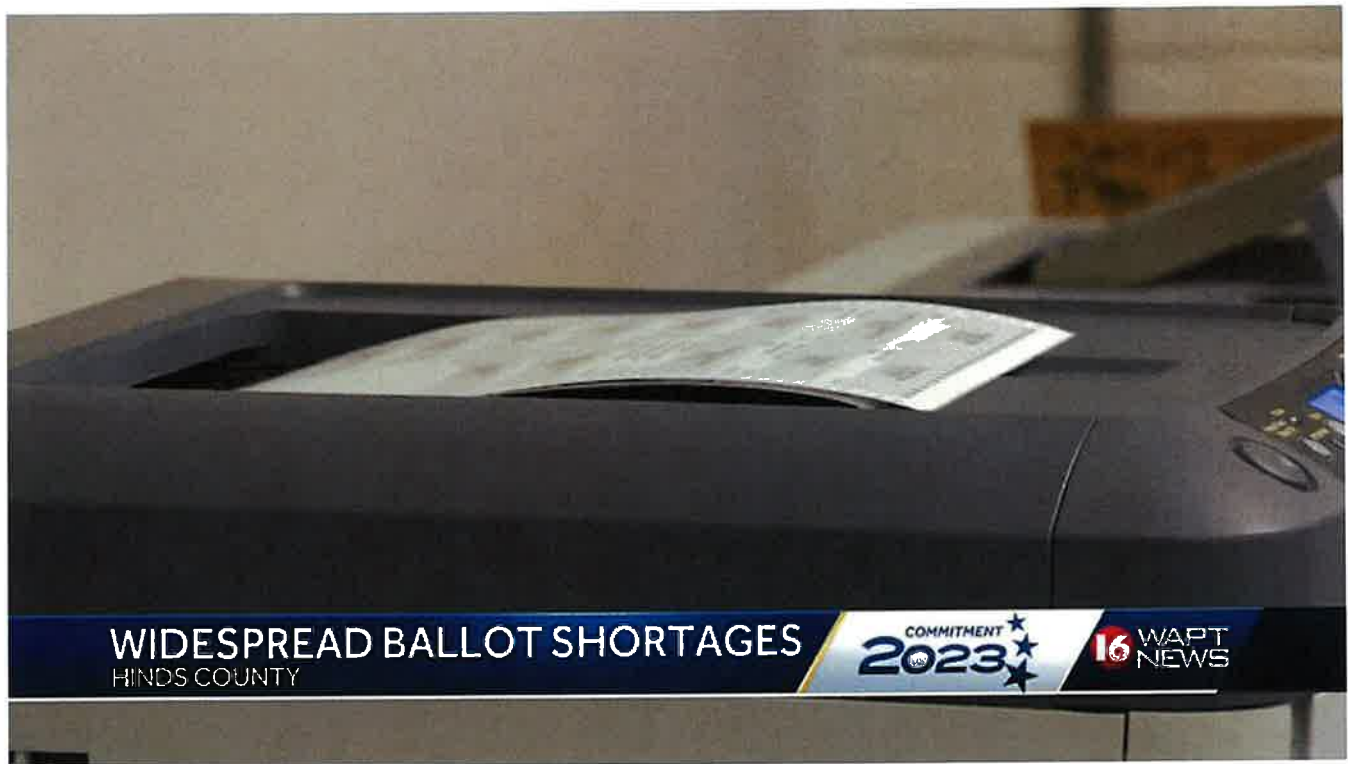


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“I’m not sure what went wrong,” said Election Commissioner RaToya McGee. “I know it was a mistake as far as the public sees it on the part of the commission.

One of the precincts that had ballot shortages and long lines was Wildwood Baptist Church in Clinton.

“When they were getting close to 200 short, and they still had a line, and so they got in queue,” McGee said.



The commission printed out more ballots, which were given to poll managers.

“I do apologize to voters and I think those who were patient,” McGee said.

According to state law, the election commission is supposed to print at least 60% of the number of registered voters at each precinct. McGee said they ordered 10% more. That wasn’t enough.

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According to the results, turnout in Hinds County was lower than it was four years ago in the last statewide election. Hinds County Circuit Clerk Zack Wallace said some precincts ran out of ballots at 9 a.m. Tuesday, two hours after the polls opened.

“I was trying to help the election commissioners out as much as I can help them print out ballots,” Wallace said.



That led to a mad scramble with printers working overtime to print new ballots. Wallace said at one point, the printer in his office broke down, and they ran out of toner and paper as voters waited and waited in line.

It's unclear where the blame lies. County Administrator Kenny Wayne Jones is pointing the finger at the election commission.

"It is so disheartening and frustrating that the election commission would drop the ball to this magnitude on one of the most critical elections in Mississippi history," Jones said in a statement.

The Mississippi Democratic Party and Mississippi Votes filed lawsuits to extend voting hours because of the ballot shortage.

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